

# Louisiana Capital Assistance Center

*A Non-Profit Law Office*

August 2010

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| <b>Position: Senior Capital Attorney</b> |
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## 1. Introduction

The Louisiana Capital Assistance Center (LCAC) is a not-for-profit law office based in New Orleans, Louisiana committed to excellence in the provision of defense services to indigent clients facing the death penalty.

The LCAC is principally a trial level office, representing indigent clients at trial in cases throughout Louisiana. In addition, the LCAC provides consultative and support services to other capital trial counsel throughout Louisiana. The LCAC is involved in the representation of a smaller number of capital defendants in post-verdict cases in Louisiana and in state or federal post-conviction in Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana.

The LCAC is committed to the following values:

- excellence in the provision of capital defender services for indigent defendants, accepting that ABA Guidelines for high quality representation in capital cases set a *minimum* standard in the field;
- client-centered and relationship based work that respects the humanity and dignity of all involved in the criminal justice system;
- innovation and creativity in the provision of capital defense services;
- the elimination of racism and other forms of discrimination in the criminal justice system.

The LCAC delivers capital defense services through a staff of dedicated attorneys and mitigation specialists, as well as contracting with outside counsel, mitigation specialists and other experts. The LCAC emphasizes team based defense and a holistic approach to questions of culpability and mitigation.

The LCAC has been in operation for over a decade and is located at The Justice Center in New Orleans, a building it shares with other not-for-profit offices working with indigent clients in the criminal justice system, including, the Capital Appeals Project of Louisiana and Reprieve. Further details are available at our website: [www.thejusticecenter.org/lcac](http://www.thejusticecenter.org/lcac).

## 2. Role

The capital trial attorney will have a mixed practice made up of: direct trial level capital representation; work on motions for new trial and other post-verdict litigation in cases ending in death verdicts; consultative and training services working with local capital defenders; and, a small number of non-capital cases selected to provide opportunities for training and skills development. Dependent upon office workload and staffing, the capital attorney may also have the opportunity to be involved in the office's capital practice in Texas, Mississippi and federal court. Within the office, the capital attorney will act as team leader on cases and projects as well as providing supervision and support to less experienced staff.

## 4. Duties

### Trial Level and Post-Verdict Representation

- As a part of a defense team, the capital trial attorney will be involved in and/or take direct responsibility for the provision of effective assistance of counsel in accordance with prevailing standards and guidelines, including: Louisiana's *Capital Defense Guidelines and Performance Standards*, the *ABA Guidelines for the Appointment and Performance of Defense Counsel in Death Penalty Cases*; and, the *ABA Supplementary Guidelines for the Mitigation Function of Defense Teams in Death Penalty Cases*.
- Work with trial counsel in cases resulting in a death verdict to investigate, develop and present litigation on motions for new trial and other post-verdict motions. Continue to act as team leader post-sentencing to investigate, develop and present any available claims in a motion for new trial.

### Consultative Services

- Providing advice and litigation support services on a consultative basis to other capital defense practitioners as appropriate to the skills and experience of the attorney;
- Developing and documenting litigation tools and strategies for use by local attorneys.

### Training

- Attendance at and participation in in-house and external trainings directed to improving and enhancing the attorney's skill set in the provision of capital defender services;
- Design, preparation and presentation of in-house and external trainings in areas of specialized knowledge or interest.

### Additional services

- Providing additional services and performing other duties from time to time as the needs of the office dictate.

## 5. Selection Criteria

Applications will be judged according to the following criteria (in no particular order) and applicants are expected to address the criteria in their application:

### Essential

- at least five years of criminal trial litigation experience;
- Experience as lead counsel in at least nine jury trials and at least one capital case tried to verdict (or two fully prepared but not tried to verdict);
  - Relevant alternative experience will be considered in lieu of satisfaction of these experience requirements.
- A knowledge of and familiarity with the standard of care for the provision of capital defender services contained in the *ABA Guidelines for the Appointment and Performance of Defense Counsel in Death Penalty Cases* and the *ABA Supplementary Guidelines for the Mitigation Function of Defense Teams in Death Penalty Cases*;
- Demonstrated skill and experience in delivery of criminal defense services at trial level;
- A commitment to excellence in the provision of capital defender services;
- Strengths in team work, client relations and relationship building;
- A commitment to working with clients in poverty;
- Creativity and energy in approaching indigent defense and capital representation;
- Familiarity and proficiency with word processor software and legal research software;
- Licensed in Louisiana or willing to take the next Louisiana bar exam.

#### **Non-Essential but desirable**

- Licensed in Louisiana;
- Extensive experience in capital casework;
- Experience or training in mental health and race in the criminal justice system;
- Experience working with disadvantaged client groups;
- Computer literacy in additional useful software such as spreadsheet and database programs, case management software.

### **6. Salary & Benefits**

- the position is full time with a 6 month probationary period and a two year minimum commitment. Attorneys are not permitted to maintain a private practice or perform work outside of the office;
- Salary range: \$81,175 to \$99,610, depending on experience. 5% employer contribution to 401(k);
- 70% contribution to health insurance for employee and dependents (including dental), 70% employer contribution to disability insurance.

### **7. Application Process**

Applications should be submitted in writing or electronically to Kim Watts, 636 Baronne Street, New Orleans La 70113, [kimw@thejusticecenter.org](mailto:kimw@thejusticecenter.org). Applicants should submit an application cover letter addressing the selection criteria and include a current CV, legal writing sample and contact details for references. It is very important that the application address the selection criteria. Deadline for applications is September 24, 2010.

*The LCAC is an equal opportunity employer.*